

### “Wastewater Treatment”

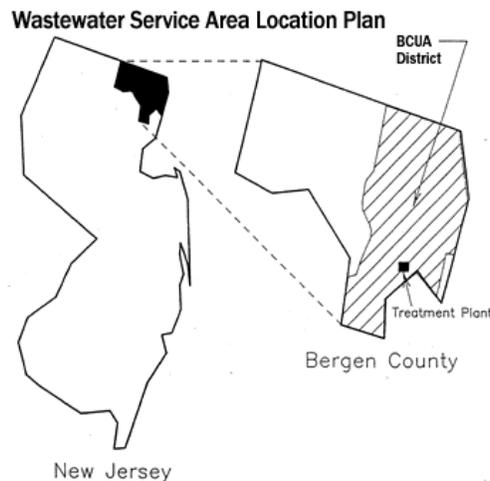
Wastewater from homes and businesses and storm runoff are carried in sewers to the Little Ferry Water Pollution Control Facility for treatment before release into the Hackensack River. Earlier, untreated waste was released directly into the ground or Overpeck Creek.

In the earliest days of Englewood, the center of town—like much of what was built on the former bed of Glacial Lake Hackensack—frequently flooded. The “Citizens’ Sewer Company” was organized in 1887 and built a drainage pipe that ran down Palisade Ave from the area of Grand Ave-Engle St to the creek near Englewood Ave. This helped reduce flooding in cellars of businesses and residences.

But flooding remained a problem for decades, as recounted in *This Was Early Englewood*. In addition, as the population grew, the problem of getting rid of household and business wastes grew proportionately. The solid rock beneath the East Hill and the swampy conditions that existed in much of the flat-lying areas of Englewood meant that septic fields would not serve the needs.

Wastewater was either released untreated into Overpeck Creek or seeped into the ground. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, both Overpeck and the Hackensack River, into which it flowed, were highly polluted. Twelve municipalities, including Englewood, joined in 1951 to build the first regional sewer lines and first wastewater treatment plant.

Today, the [Bergen County Utilities Authority](http://www.bcua.org) handles waste from 46 municipalities, serving a population of more than 500,000 people. [Modern engineering practices](#) clean the effluent before release into the Hackensack River. [Sludge](#) is transported by barge for further treatment. The system can handle up to 109 million gallons a day.



Englewood has a parallel [storm drain system](#). Precipitation runs into the gutters you see on the street and flows through pipes. Storm water runoff may be directed into the sanitary sewer system, although during very heavy storm events, untreated wastewater may overwhelm the capacity of the system and flow untreated into Overpeck Creek.



Storm drain with pipes visible beneath it during construction work  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm\\_drain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm_drain)

#### More information

J.A. Humphrey (1899) *Englewood, Its Annals and Reminiscences*. pp. 121 and 151.

J.K. Lattimer (1990) *This Was Early Englewood*. pp. 180 – 187.

Bergen County Utilities Authority <http://www.bcu.org/>

Storm and sanitary sewers <http://msu-water.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Storm-vs.pdf>